

NORTH HALTON HERITAGE AREA

GLEN WILLIAMS

Sam Beaumont came from Yorkshire to buy woollen mills in Glen

Samuel Beaumont was born at Holmfirth, Yorkshire, England on April 8, 1840. His birthplace was in the heart of a woollen manufacturing district and he received a thorough training in the business. At 19 years of age Samuel had charge of one of the largest woollen mills in the district.

Samuel came to Canada in 1879 and held responsible positions at Woollen mills in Galt and Ancaster. In 1893 he commenced his own business at Ancaster and during 1875-76 he operated the woollen mills at Kilbride.

In 1877 Beaumont operated the woollen mills at Norval until his firm was ruined by fire the following year. With very little insurance he suffered a heavy financial loss and relocated to Glen Williams in 1878.

Glen Williams, known as Williamsburg until the opening of the post office, has always been connected with the woollen business. When Samuel bought the first Woollen Mills from George Ross in 1878 he used the power of the Credit River to turn the immense water wheel. A 75 horse-power steam engine was kept "in reserve" in case of emergency.

New Zealand wool was used in the Beaumont mill because of its finer and more uniform quality, compared to the Canadian product. The Beaumont firm did its own spinning and carding "right from scratch."

Products from the mill included knitted underwear, yarns, woollen blankets and high grade ladies' and gentlemen's worsted and cashmere hosiery. Samuel Beaumont travelled to England on three occasions to purchase equipment for the mill.

A making business was purchased by the Beaumonts in 1906 from Dominion Glove Works. This business was established in the Glen in 1881.

Samuel Beaumont married Emma Harpin, a member of a very prominent

family in Yorkshire. They had six sons: Joseph, Fred, Lindley, William, George and Mathew. Two daughters died in infancy. The sons took an active part in the business and were raised in the Samuel Beaumont residence next to the mill. Doctor Ashenurst presently resides in the house, which once hosted several church picnics on the large front lawns.

Samuel Beaumont died March 21, 1906 and Joseph, the eldest son, assumed control of the business in 1885 until his death in 1943. Joseph, not unlike his father, was very active in the Anglican Church in Georgetown and Glen Williams. He was involved with the plans to build an "English" Church in the Glen against the blessings of Bishop Du Moulin.

Both Samuel and Joseph were members of the Masonic Lodge which was invited to lay the corner stone at St. Alban's Anglican Church.

Joseph Beaumont married Janet Cooper and raised a family of five: Winifred, Harold (Tom), Arthur, Harpin and Eleanor. In a house at the corner of Joseph and Main Street in the Glen, he purchased the Manor House from Squire Williams in 1910. Each child took an active interest in the mill works.

The second eldest son, Arthur, eventually took over the business at the time of his father's death in 1943. Art sold the mill in 1957 to Sam Penrice, Gord Graham and Frank Crew. Penrice and son still operate the business which was founded in 1878 under the Beaumont name.

Arthur Beaumont married Marie Graham and they made their home in the lovely brick house which the Beaumonts purchased in 1910. Art served as a member of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board during World War II and represented the heavy hosiery section of the Canadian Woollen and Knitting Goods on the Board.

Arthur was a charter member and past president of the Georgetown Lions Club.

He continued the family's ties with the Anglican Church and served as Warden for St. Alban's in the Glen for 30 years.

Marie Beaumont has operated an antique shop from the lovely grounds situated in the heart of the village for 14 years. Her shop specializes in Canadian pine furniture and her clientele is mainly from the Toronto-Oakville area.

Arthur and Marie's only child Judith,

resides in Georgetown and is married to Graham Cobelle, a chartered accountant. Judith is very active with the Halton County Museum situated at Kelso Conservation Area, near Milton.

It is fitting to note a plaque was erected in St. Alban's Anglican Church on June 20th of this year in memory of Arthur Beaumont who like his ancestors, had a great love for his church and village.

The Village of Glen Williams

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NORVAL

Halton Sketches

The village of Norval, as we know it today, developed from the pioneer enterprise of John McNab and sons, Scottish settlers who came from Vermont in 1820. In fact, the village was called "McNabville" until 1840 when the first post office was opened in the community.

James McNab (a son) dammed the Credit River and built a frame grist mill in 1828 which was later replaced by a brick structure and once stood near the entrance to the "Credit Valley Club" originally known as the "Riviera."

The mill was always the hub of Norval's industry. Several descendants of mill employees still dwell in the village.

James McNab met with an unfortunate accident soon after the mill's erection. A mill stone slipped and crushed his leg and it had to be amputated above the knee. The mills were then leased to John Barnhart in 1830 but were sold to a General Adamson in 1838. Adamson's son-in-law, Col. Mitchell, ran the mills. From 1845 to 1859 the grist mill was leased to Gooderham and Worts of the famed distilling families.

Robert Noble of Carlisle, England; reputed to be the last miller in Canada with faith in the old stone grinding system, bought the grist, saw and woollen mills in 1868 from the Bank of Ontario, which had

control of the property by this time.

Robert Noble was well acquainted with the grist business in England. He apprenticed in Dundas and eventually worked in mills at Elora and Freeleton in managerial positions. He arrived in Canada in 1852.

For more than 50 years, Robert Noble and his son, Col. Alexander Noble, steadily increased the flour mill production until the names Noble and Norval became synonymous in Canada's flour industry. In 1880, Noble rebuilt the mills and in 1889 changed to the "modern" roller system.

Some grain was purchased from the prairies but the main supply came from local farmers. It was not unusual to see a string of wagons filled with grain awaiting their turn to weigh in on the scales at the Noble Flour Mill. The neighbouring Hollywood Hotel would be a welcome site after a long dusty ride into the village. A hot full course meal could be had for 35c, which included a thick slab of hot apple pie.

After 1856 the mill was always serviced by the Grand Trunk Railway which had its station about 1 1/4 miles above the village. A group of land owners asked too much money when plans for the railroad route were being made. Both parties held out, so the railway was put through on the present CNR line north of the village.

The station was a shipping point for the Noble Flour which was mainly sold throughout the Quebec and Maritime regions, England and Scotland and even the West Indies.

Noble had two elevators used for storage of grain—one at Georgetown and another at Acton railroad stations.

Norval's Grand Trunk Station was closed on July 12, 1926, partly because local farmers had changed their business from grain growing to dairying or stock raising. By this time modern trucks could be the means of transporting goods right from the farm to the market.

Had it not been for the bargaining stalemate between landowner and the GTR, the railroad would have passed closer to the village, thus inviting more industry. In this regard Norval's industrial potential certainly suffered.

The Toronto Suburban Railway which ran just south of Norval, on the hill, had a siding which ran directly to the flour mill. Radial freight cars began shipping carload

lots of flour from the time the TSR's first car passed through the village in April 1917.

With the large volume and the integrity of his business, Robert Noble provided a banking service for customers until 1907 when a branch of the Farmers Bank was established in Norval. However, it closed in a short time.

A branch of the Metropolitan Bank was opened on February 6, 1914, at the request and with the influence of Robert Noble. With the decline in business after the sale of the Noble Flour Mill to W.J. Campbell Ltd. in 1919, plus the fact Upper Canada College decided not to relocate, the bank closed April 25, 1931. It had then amalgamated with the Bank of Nova Scotia. The former bank building now houses David Vance's Art Gallery at the village's "four corners."

The farm buildings near the old mill pond were always the centre of activity. Old timers can still recall local farmers cutting blocks of ice from the pond deep in winter and loading them onto their sleds to take home for storage under sawdust.

In 1925 the Noble Flour Mill was sold to W.B. Browne and Co. of Toronto by the Bank of Nova Scotia which had taken possession through the falling of W.J. Campbell.

The mill burned in January 1930 but was still in operation up to 1952 under Browne and Co.

The Noble family and the flour mill have both played important roles in the development of the village of Norval. The Noble brand name "Norval" for pastry flour, and "King's Choice" for bread flour, were known throughout the Dominion and overseas.

Robert Noble also served on the local school board as secretary and was a magistrate. His son Alex Noble served as a Lieutenant Colonel of the 20th Halton Rifles, which is now known as the Lorne Scots.

Alex played an important role in keeping the new Presbyterian Church building inside the village when it was erected in 1878, as opposed to having it located on the hill "outside the village."

It is interesting to note how the village of Norval thrived at one time, compared to its present "commuter" status.

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